

I've had my day in court. For those who didn't know, I was arrested in September, 1998 for unknowingly taking a gun into the Colorado Springs airport. If I had known I had that pistol with me, I sure wouldn't have put my bag through the airport x-ray machine where its discovery would be certain. However, the prosecutor was convinced that I knew I had the gun.

Yeah, right. I'm going to intentionally take a loaded .380 pistol with me onto an airplane with a changeover in Dallas (which means another airport x-ray machine) and on to Washington, D.C. - a.k.a. Gun Control Central. If I did that on purpose - someone should sign me up for the World's Dumbest Criminals. Sheesh.

This honest mistake, which, incidentally, occurs all the time according to the police who arrested me, landed me a felony charge and a misdemeanor charge. I was looking at over two years in prison and over one hundred thousand dollars in criminal fines. Of course, the FAA also fined me civilly.

I had demanded a jury trial, and being a felony, it would be jury of twelve. I couldn't help but be relieved that this incident happened in the conservative center of the front range, in the very county where the sheriff hands out concealed carry permits to virtually any qualified person who applies. I figured it would be pretty hard to weed out all pro-gun people from the jury pool.

I was right. The final jury had seven men - six of whom owned guns - and five women. One of the women selected worked for the post office and stated that she wished she could take a gun to work. I felt pretty secure; I only needed one holdout. A postal worker looked pretty good to me by now.

The prosecutor dismissed one guy who was very outspoken about his bias against the government and his favor for gun owners. I doubt she'd have kept him on even if he hadn't proven to be partial, because there was another candidate who gave all the right answers and she asked that he be dismissed. I had the gut feeling that he was not only pro-gun but maybe even militia. The D.A. must have had the same feeling. I was sorry to see him go. Some advice - if you want to serve on a jury in a gun case, white boy, don't show up with a shaved head.

I got a final plea bargain offer just as trial was starting: Plead guilty to the misdemeanor (carrying concealed) and get probation. Naturally, I said no. The judge informed me if I was convicted, I'd go straight to jail, do not pass GO, do not collect \$200. I have to admit it was pretty scary. I still said no. In case you're interested, the plea bargains get better the closer you get to trial. If you ever consider taking one, hang on to the last minute.

It was actually kind of ridiculous to see this woman prosecute this case. The police officer who arrested me actually gave a lot of testimony that was beneficial to my case. He said I didn't know I had the gun, and he had no reason to disbelieve me. She really should have done her homework better.

Early in the trial, I was hyper but hopeful. As the darn thing dragged on, I became enervated. I anxiously wanted this thing to be over with. I was torn with doubt and fear, and I despised that darned D.A. for what she was doing to me. It was clearly becoming personal.

In her closing arguments, she actually accused me of lying on the stand. She was pathetically grasping at straws to convince the jury. Evidently, this conviction was very important to her. It was disgusting.

When the jury went to deliberate, I went out to move my car closer to the courthouse. By the time I got back, there was a verdict.

I was thrilled. A verdict in less than twenty minutes. Quick verdicts usually look pretty good for the defendant. The jury filed in. I had already figured out who the foreman would be, and I was right.

The verdict was handed to the judge. I held my breath. He read the first charge; the felony. Not Guilty. I The misdemeanor. Not Guilty. I exhaled. What a relief. What an incredible relief. It took a few minutes to compose myself. I sure don't want to go through that again. But I must give kudos to Paul Grant in Parker - as his card says "Attorney at Law/Freedom Fighter."

Meanwhile, the D.A. had vanished. Poof. Gone. Like I said, it was personal. She, like many other D.A.'s, was in love with the conviction. She needed that conviction, regardless of my innocence. When she didn't get it, she was completely unprofessional. A real professional wouldn't have wasted the state's money in the first place.

Thank goodness for the jury. Jurors usually take their responsibilities very seriously, especially when the case is handled professionally and fairly. After the trial, I spoke with some of the jurors. They felt this should never have gone to trial. They were upset at the waste of money and time to prosecute what they felt was clearly an innocent and harmless mistake.

Guess what Miss Prosecutor - you blew it in the eyes of those jurors. You took the credibility of the court system down a few more notches in the eyes of a few more people. You gave them a few more reasons to distrust the government. You are personally responsible for undermining public confidence in your supposedly honorable position.

You never even knew you were targeting a member of the media, did you? I can deal with what you did to me personally; I'm strong. But I abhor what you and your ilk have done to the integrity of the judicial process in this great nation of ours. I despise the way you pervert the laws and the process for your own glory. I'm disgusted at you on behalf of the many innocent people who might be weaker than me; victims that you casually trod underfoot in your pursuit of a conviction. How many innocent people have you bullied into a plea bargain? What shameful business is conducted in the land of the free and the home of the brave in the name of justice!

I don't get my gun back until the appeals period is over. But I will get it back. Like my refusal to accept a plea bargain, it's a matter of principle. And if I don't, well, the pen is not only mightier than the sword, it can shine the light of truth brighter than the noonday sun.

PS. I got my gun back.